DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 397 PS 023 642

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TITLE The Combined Family: A Guide to Creating Successful Step-Relationships.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-306-44500-X
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 316p.
AVAILABLE FROM Insight Books/Plenum Publishing, 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013-1578 ($25.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Childhood Needs; Discipline; Divorce; Family Characteristics; *Family Life; Family Problems; Interpersonal Relationship; Marital Satisfaction; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Role; *Remarriage; *Stepfamily

ABSTRACT

Because of the significant rates of divorce and remarriage in the United States, the stepfamily is becoming an increasingly mainstream way of life alongside the traditional nuclear family structure. This book is an essential guide for understanding an individual's multiple family roles as well as the emotional and psychological nuances within step-relationships. Chapters in the book discuss the following: (1) the structure of nuclear and combined families; (2) myths and realities of stepfamilies; (3) the evolution of nuclear, one-parent, and combined families; (4) the dynamics of new couples; (5) informing children of a pending remarriage; (6) logistics of a wedding ceremony for combined families; (7) making a home for a combined family; (8) who is and who is not a member of the family; (9) role of the remarried parent; (10) role of the stepparent; (11) conflicts in the role of stepparents as parents; (12) the place of children in combined families; (13) the different levels on which combined-family members must interact with each other; (14) the role of former spouses; (15) discipline in combined families; (16); managing a household of different lifestyles; (17) expanding the family framework; (18) stages of development for combined families; (19) establishing a new identity in the stepfamily; (20) what to do when help is needed; and (21) a new vocabulary for combined families. (HTH)

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